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HOSPITAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

ALICE SHEPHERD GILMAN, R.N., DEPARTMENT EDITOR

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARDS OF TRUSTEES AND THE COMMUNITY TO SCHOOLS OF NURSING¹

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THE trustees of any school for the higher education of young women accept responsibilities not only to the student and her family, but to the public. The public has a right to expect that the graduates of such schools shall be better prepared to undertake responsibilities and to render effective service than those other members of society who have been less favored by fortune and opportunity. The parents of prospective students will give very careful consideration to the reputation of the school for maintaining high standards of education in its faculty and student body amid surroundings calculated to make for character building, and the school which stands the test of time will have gained a reputation to be envied by those who have been content with lesser ideals. Opportunity and advertising may carry a school on for a time, but no school for young women will flourish long unless it rests upon a reputation for work well done; such a reputation will be particularly required by the fathers and mothers of the community. The student seeks education because she has awakened in her the consciousness that without it she will be unable to understand or fully enjoy the life which surrounds her, that she will be able to render but a limited and unintelligent service, or she may seek it only because her parents desire its benefits for her. Whatever the reason for its seeking it is incumbent upon the Boards of Trustees to see that her confidence, that of her parents and the community at large shall not be misplaced.

The Boards of Directors of Schools of Nursing not only have all the obligations incumbent upon those who direct other schools for young women, but they have in addition, and in common with other professional schools, a very distinct obligation to the profession into which the student will seek entrance upon graduation. Unlike that of all other schools, the course of instruction must of necessity be carried on simultaneously with the work of a hospital in its care of the sick, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. This does not mean that the student should be on duty long hours daily for seven days a week; such a course would be not only unjust but unintelligent and in the end would defeat the objects for which the school

¹ Read at the annual convention of the New York State Nurses' Association, Utica, October 25, 1921.

was incorporated; as parents, friends, and the very public it was designed to serve would advise students against seeking education under such impossible conditions.

The greatest handicap that Schools of Nursing have struggled under has been and still is the lack of consideration given by the very persons who should stand strongest behind them (I mean their Board of Directors). Their need, like the need of all schools, is for a sound financial basis upon which to work. Do we expect schools for teachers to operate without funds from the municipalities or the state? Why should not such funds be available for those who are being prepared to teach health conservation and disease prevention? Why should we expect the hospital (which if well run and for the benefit of all the community must be run with a deficit) to furnish all such funds?

Schools of Nursing, at least in this country, came into being by the insistence of Boards of Directors. For a long time they received scant cordiality from either the hospitals or the medical profession. Groups of public spirited men and women insisted upon better care of the sick inside and outside hospitals and to meet this need Schools of Nursing were called into being and the earliest of them were financed by independent funds. I regret to say that due to near-sightedness, or politics or other exigencies of the situation, all except one have fallen from grace. If the School of Nursing is to do the work in the hospital and in the community that is its birthright it is high time that our Boards of Directors should look after its independent financing. Lack of money has been the chief obstacle in the path of its development and progress and has been the cause of much unnecessary sacrifice of student nurses.

All good hospitals operate with a deficit. The better the hospital, the larger the endowment or deficit. The reason is not far to seek. Only a very small proportion of even the private room patients really pay fully for what they expect. In reality a hospital is a hotel for the sick. It has all the expense of maintenance of other hotels plus that of medical attendance, nursing attendance, special departments, such as the operating rooms, the pathological laboratory, the X-Ray, radiocardiograph, metabolism, dispensary, diet kitchens, hydrotherapy, pharmacy, social service, ambulance, etc., to say nothing of additional laundry and employees. Medical and surgical supplies alone furnish a very substantial proportion of the money output, but what patient ever thinks of paying for them? In fact, what proportion of hospital patients expect to pay even the same amount for hospital accommodations as he would be obliged to pay for hotel accommodations in the same city? This is a queer form of reasoning

on the part of the public, very few of whom want to feel that they are accepting charity, but it is a view that must be taken into consideration by those who are responsible for financing hospitals and Schools of Nursing.

If the hospital is not to receive at least as much revenue from its private rooms as would be paid for accommodations of a similar character in local hotels, how can we reasonably expect it to efficiently run not only its kitchens, laundry and engine rooms, all the special departments, and in addition to find the finances for maintaining an educational institution which must be on a par with other schools of the community? I have nothing but the highest praise for the efforts that hospitals have put forth to honestly meet the obligations placed upon them and I am willing to admit, when I recall to mind the long line of splendid women who have been the product of their teachings, that they have done well, for what these women have done the hospitals have made possible. But do we continue the apprentice system in education today because some good workmen were produced by it? Have we not found a better form of education?

If the first consideration for the successful school must be that it rest upon a firm financial foundation, surely the next consideration must be given to its faculty. No school ever was or ever can be better than the leadership given it. The principal of the School of Nursing must be selected with as much care as the principal of any other professional school. She must be well educated fundamentally and professionally and in addition she must have executive ability and leadership. It is the solemn duty of the Board of Directors to find such a woman to take charge of their School of Nursing and not appoint some one because she has acceptably taken care of their children, or because she gets on well with the doctors, or is a good surgical nurse. A competent principal will draw about her women of like ability and aspirations, but she must receive the active backing of her Board of Trustees and School Committee if she is to weather the storms that are sure to arise when she must run counter to tradition, prejudice or convenience. President Hadley once said that a strong student body will make a strong faculty, but my experience and observation lead me to believe that the stronger the faculty, the more surely will a strong student body be the result. I think that the consideration given to providing adequate school accommodations, such as class rooms, laboratories, libraries, dormitories and recreation halls has resulted in the erection of some very attractive and well appointed school buildings, but such buildings are the exception rather than the rule. By coöperation with one another and with the other schools of the community, Schools of Nursing could conserve effort and avoid duplication of work, and a few of our best

schools are beginning to see the light in this direction and their leadership in coöperation for better teaching is sure to be followed by an increasing number of schools each year. No principal (no matter how able she may be) can maintain a progressive school without a strong teaching staff. Intelligent financing and coöperation with other good schools of the community will be needed in order to obtain the services of a desirable staff of instructors.

The curriculum has been given years of study by a large group of nurse educators and as a result of their collaboration the National League of Nursing Education, several years ago, published what has become known and generally accepted as the Standard Curriculum for Schools of Nursing. This can only be adopted if the school has an adequate and well qualified staff of instructors.

In this democratic country of ours much has been done and much more may be done with very limited beginnings, but a School of Nursing can not develop the nurse administrator, the public health director nor the private duty nurse that the public needs unless noble minded, level headed, well educated women enter Schools of Nursing. If the care of the sick is a community problem, which we all concede it to be, is it not a community responsibility to see that Schools of Nursing have the necessary status educationally and legally to place them on a firm foundation so that their product, the graduate nurse, will not be forced to meet on an almost equal footing the graduates of short course schools? Is it reasonable to suppose that large numbers of educated women will enter Schools of Nursing if, when graduated, they find that the public accepts the short term nurse on an equal standing?

Every short term school by its advertisements, "Be a Trained Nurse," and by its product, "the professional nurse," belittles the legitimate School of Nursing and makes just so much more difficult its maintenance and development. If such schools would be honest and place quite frankly before the public the limitations of their graduates and call them attendants or some other name that would be readily understood they could serve instead of exploiting the public.

This problem should not be left to the nurses to struggle with. If the community expects thousands of young women to go into Schools of Nursing and give two or more years of their lives taking care of the sick in hospitals, it seems to me that it is the community's responsibility to make them feel that their services are appreciated and their educational status recognized. The community has no right to complain of shortage of nurses in Schools of Nursing nor in any of the avenues of nursing work until it has fully met its responsibilities in this matter. How often do we find the community taking any active interest in recruiting students for Schools of Nursing?

Is it fair that this task, in addition to that of teaching students and supervising the care of the sick in a hospital should fall upon the principal of a School of Nursing? Is any other principal expected to carry such a heavy responsibility? The community has come to depend almost exclusively on students in Schools of Nursing to care for hospital patients practically gratuitously:—they very seldom appreciate the value in dollars and cents to the hospital of this intelligent and willing service. Viewed from the teachings of our Lord and Master, who have been the greatest philanthropists during the past fifty years in hospitals, those who have erected wonderful buildings dedicated to the care of the sick, or those who have spent the best years of their lives in giving bedside care to the sick?

Boards of Managers should acquaint themselves in detail with the essential factors for the development and maintenance of a School of Nursing; they should see that it is comfortably housed, and in connection with a hospital that has not only gained the confidence of the public, but is ranked in class "A" by the American College of Surgeons and State Board of Charities. They should see that the finances of the school will make possible the appointment of a strong teaching staff and the development of reasonable social, educational and recreational activities outside the hospital,—in other words, they should make the school a place where they will be eager to send their daughters instead of their maids.

WHO'S WHO IN THE NURSING WORLD

V. CLARA D. NOYES

BIRTHPLACE: Port Deposit, Md. PARENTAGE: American. PRESENT POSITION: Director, Department of Nursing, American Red Cross. EDUCATION: Private schools in Maryland and Connecticut. GRADUATE OF: Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Nursing, Baltimore, Md., class of 1896. POSITIONS HELD: Head Nurse, Johns Hopkins Hospital for one year; Superintendent of Nurses, New England Hospital for Women and Children, Boston, Mass., for four years; Superintendent of Hospital and Training School, St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, Mass., for nine years; General Superintendent of Training Schools, Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, for six years; Director, Bureau of Nursing Service, American Red Cross, from 1916 to summer of 1919; Acting Director, Department of Nursing, American Red Cross, for a few months; Director, Department of Nursing, American Red Cross, from summer of 1919 to Present time. OFFICES: President, National League of Nursing Education, from 1913 to 1916; President, Board of Directors, *American Journal of Nursing*, from 1911 to 1918; President, American Nurses' Association, from 1918 to present time; Chairman, National Committee to Secure Rank for Military Nurses, 1918-1920; Chairman, National Committee, Red Cross Nursing Service, from 1919 to present time; Chairman, Committee on Headquarters, National Nursing Associations, from 1919 to present time. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Organized School of Midwifery in New York City. While Director of Bureau of Nursing Service of the American Red Cross, organized nursing personnel of Army and Navy base hospitals, hospital and training school units and emergency detachments, assigning 20,000 Red Cross nurses to service; Decorated with the Patriotic Service Medal of the American Social Science Association and Council of the National Institute of Social Science "for services of high and inestimable value to her country and its wounded." AUTHOR OF: Papers on nursing subjects.